

USEPA/OECA/OC
State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG): 2000-2001
Maine: Computerized Wastewater Discharge Data Collection and Analysis System
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Status Report - Maine Department of Environmental Protection
Electronic Discharge Monitoring Report (E-DMR) Project
October 31, 2002

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MeDEP) received a Grant from the U.S. EPA Office of Compliance and Enforcement Assistance (OECA) to develop an electronic data collection and storage system for discharge monitoring data from persons permitted to discharge wastewater in Maine. The system was intended to allow entry of daily monitoring data at the various wastewater treatment facilities in the State. These data would be transmitted to a secure central data repository where the data would be stored and could be retrieved for compliance monitoring, technical assistance and, if necessary, enforcement actions. It was planned that the system would be developed in early 2002, with a three-month test period in the Summer of 2002 followed by general implementation by the end of 2002. Due to delays noted below, we are requesting that the grant from EPA OECA be extended for one year at no additional cost to EPA.

Upon receipt of the grant, the MeDEP organized a Stakeholders Group including wastewater operators from the public and private sectors, wastewater treatment facility inspectors from the MeDEP, and staff from the licensing, enforcement, technical assistance and data management units within the MeDEP's Bureau of Land and Water Quality. The Stakeholders have met six times since the awarding of the grant. The major effort of the group has been to develop a set of specifications for the E-DMR system that would be used as the basis for a Request for Proposals to hire a contractor to develop the system.

The Stakeholders Group completed the development of the specifications for the system in late 2001. At that time, the specification called for a stand-alone client program that would be installed on computers at the various wastewater treatment facilities in the state. Operators would use this software to enter their daily monitoring data. Each month, the program would perform the necessary calculations and data formatting to produce electronic versions of the MeDEP 49 Form and the EPA DMR. These would be sent to the MeDEP via the Internet using an XML data transfer protocol. The MeDEP had invested in a project coordinated by ECOS to develop an XML data transfer schema that would be used both for data transfer between the wastewater facilities and the MeDEP and also between the MeDEP and EPA. Since the system relied on the XML schema, the RFP was delayed until the schema was not received by the MeDEP until early April 2002. By this time, the State of Maine had determined that there was a severe shortfall in State revenues for the fiscal years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. Part of the reaction to this shortfall was to freeze all contracts, regardless of the source of funds, until a better

accounting could be made. During this period, all state agencies also looked for ways to complete tasks within State Government rather than contracting for services with outside vendors.

The Director of the MeDEP Division of Computer Services suggested that the State Bureau of Information Services (BIS) could, possibly, develop the system outlined in the RFP. MeDEP staff met twice with representatives from BIS and discussed the possibility of developing a web based system rather than a stand-alone client package. The BIS representative assured the MeDEP staff that all of the functionality required in the system specification could be delivered with a web-based system. He demonstrated systems that had been developed by BIS for periodic reporting similar to that required by the EDMR system. He noted that these systems had been in place for over one year and were working well for both the clients and the agencies that had sponsored the system. The BIS representative presented these systems before a meeting of the Stakeholders Group and all agreed that a web-based system should be developed. MeDEP staff members have since met with programming staff from BIS and the BIS Staff are preparing a proposal to develop the system.

I project that the BIS proposal will be delivered by November 8, 2002 and that an agreement will be negotiated between the MeDEP and BIS by December 15, 2002. The initial projection by the BIS programming staff is that they could have a prototype of the system in four months. Thus, we envision that the system will be able to be tested next summer and fully implemented within six months of the initial tests. Given the unforeseen delays in the development process and the decision to switch from a client program to a web-based implementation, we are requesting a one-year extension of the grant with no increase in funding from EPA.